



## Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

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## News Release

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### Local Teacher Recognized for Outstanding Teaching Innovation

#### Mathematics Teacher from Calabasas Middle School Selected as 2005 Presidential Award State Finalist

#### Awardees Announced in March 2006

Washington, DC – Did your teacher ever take you to a theme park or use a model of a rollercoaster to teach physics concepts in class, allow you to learn fractions and angles by building a gingerbread house, or measure force and motion on the basketball court? Highly qualified science and mathematics teachers bring these types of lessons to life for their students. One of these remarkable teachers, Aileen Scott, a Mathematics teacher at Calabasas Middle School in Rio Rico, is being rewarded for her success in using innovative methods and strategies in her classroom. Scott has been named a state finalist for the 2005 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), the nation's highest honor for K-12 teaching in these fields.

Established by Congress in 1983, and administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation, the Presidential Awards allow for each state to select up to three mathematics and three science teachers as state finalists. From this field of state finalists, a maximum of 108 Presidential Awardees are selected representing the 50 states and four U.S. jurisdictions. Recipients of the 2005 Presidential Awards will be announced during a week of celebration events in March 2006 in Washington, DC.

When Scott was told she was a state finalist, she said, "I was truly surprised. To be one of three teachers from this state is certainly an honor. I'm very proud and thrilled with the recognition it brings to my students and district."

Scott is one of the 253 state finalists for the prestigious Presidential Award. Her teaching style is key to her success in the classroom. "I would describe my teaching style as collaborative. I think this style is so effective because it promotes accountability and keeps team members working together in a positive manner," said Scott. "I've seen weak math students feel safer with this style, as well as strong math students improve their communication skills as they take on leadership roles."

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“Presidential Awardees represent exceptional professional models of what we are looking for in science and mathematics teachers. They are highly qualified in their fields, deeply knowledgeable about their subjects, and equipped with the methods and strategies that improve teaching and learning in science and mathematics,” said Celeste Pea, Ph.D., Program Director of Elementary, Secondary, and Informal Education programs at the National Science Foundation. “They strive to provide opportunities for their students to reach their potential in their respective schools and communities. Through this recognition, we hope to motivate similar creativity in other teachers, and to attract new recruits to the mathematics and science teaching profession.”

“I can’t remember ever wanting to be anything else. There’s something about math problems that just look like puzzles to me, and I enjoy the challenge of solving those puzzles. With middle school students, I can usually hook them with that type of thinking. If you give students a good challenge and just enough information to intrigue them, they sit up and take notice to learn a little more and apply it,” said Scott when asked about why she became a teacher.

The Presidential Awards are a great opportunity for the country to recognize the importance of all teachers. “I think The Presidential Award would mean the absolute highest honor of my career. It would be the Nobel Prize of middle school math or the Oscar of classroom instruction,” said Scott. “I’ve spent almost 25 years continuously learning and implementing some of the best ways to teach mathematics and the changes keep coming, keeping this career an interesting challenge.”

The goal of the Presidential Awards is to identify and recognize highly qualified teachers. As part of the recognition process, Awardees will take part in a weeklong series of networking and professional development activities in Washington, DC. In addition, each Awardee will also receive \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation. For more information about PAEMST, see forms and instructions available at: [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org).